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reputation of being a leader in this important line of business. Mr. Halbert's fidelity to the true principles of art, both theoretical and practical, has produced results that will give a quickening inspiration to American decorative design.

By way of illustrating some of his latest patterns produced in French appliqué relief, Mr. Halbert has issued a new illustrated catalogue. The designs are richly and exquisitely modeled, and every pattern will repay examination. They are delightfully free in decoration and treatment, and constitute a lesson in style which modern decorators may find expedient to study. Mr. Halbert has for many years been an apostle of the doctrine that the best way to decorate an interior is to contrast the flat effect of wall-paper with a raised surface on the ceiling. This method of ceiling decoration is a true Renaissance of the method adopted in the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, when the ceilings of baronial halls were covered with the most exquisite traceries. While not so elaborate as the Oriental traceries of the Moors in the construction of their vaulted ceilings, it is yet in harmony with the instincts of one of the finest epochs in decorative art that the world has ever seen, known collectively as the Sarenic method. And such a style does not merely concern itself with style alone, but affords a favorable opportunity for the judicious employment of beautiful coloring. The designs manufactured by Mr. Halbert are decidedly fresh and clever, and are graceful without being heavy in treatment. He has happily avoided extreme effects of every kind, for his work is neither barbarous nor grotesque on the one hand nor too simpering and attenuated on the other, but holds steadfastly to that exquisite middle ground of beauty making handsome as well as eminently useful ornament for either wall or ceiling.

#### DECORATIVE NOTE.

THE library is finished in red and gold with brilliant effect, and the fireplace, which is bricked from the floor to the ceiling, reveals rich designs in carving. From this room opens the morning room, which is finished in blue and silver. The ceiling, tinted in silver, is covered with an elaborate pattern of white Escorial lace, through the fretwork of which the metallic luster glistens and forms a pattern in itself. The fireplace in this room is of Sienna marble. Above the mantelrests a mirror encased in modeling. The furniture is of silvered wood.

#### WOOD FLOOR FINISHING.

By A. ASHMUN KELLY.



HARDWOOD floors are perhaps the most beautiful and satisfactory of floor finishes, but the proper care required for a waxed hardwood floor almost renders such a thing an impossibility with by far the larger portion of our people, says A. Ashmun Kelly, in *Painting and Decorating*. To go over the floor two or three times a week with wax and polishing brushes, the brushes, perhaps, on the feet of servants, as in Europe, and to doff everyday shoes, and don felt slippers every time one has occasion to tread upon the delectable surface, are things hardly among the possibilities in this country. And, yet, those

at least who have been abroad and seen the marvelous polish which the waxed floors of the public halls and galleries there present, will wonder why we do not have the same thing here. Many of those floors have been polished and repolished for perhaps a century, and with the almost sacred care bestowed upon them, it is no wonder they are so beautiful and rare.

There are several methods of treating hardwood floors, and several methods of performing the same operation. One method of waxing a floor is to take white beeswax, and dissolve it in turpentine, adding a little drying japan, which will make the wax dry harder and quicker. The wax must first be melted, then add the turpentine. This mixture is made somewhat thick, and afterward is thinned down to a working consistency with linseed oil, taking great care not to get in too much oil, as this would spoil the work. The floor must be very clean to begin with. Then give it a coat of wax to fill up the pores of the wood, rubbing off the surplus wax. Allow this coat to harden. Put on another coat, which polish.

When an old floor is to be waxed, first clean it thoroughly with scouring soap, using ammonia



OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL. CARVED IN WOOD BY HERMAN SITT.

freely, where necessary. When perfectly dry and clean, apply a coat of white shellac, (or orange, if the wood is dark). Rub this down with fine sandpaper and oil, when dry. Then put on the wax and proceed to polish in the usual way. This method is especially useful where it is desired to complete the job hurriedly.

A highly recommended preparation for waxing hardwood floors is made according to the following formula, which is taken from the *American Druggist*:

Yellow wax.....	25 oz.
Yellow ceresin.....	25 "
Burnt sienna.....	5 "
Boiled linseed oil.....	1 "
Spirits of turpentine, one gill, or about.....	30 "

Melt the wax and ceresin at a gentle heat, then add the sienna, previously well triturated with the boiled linseed oil, and mix well. When the mixture begins to cool, add the turpentine, or so much of it as is required to make a mass of the consistency of an ointment.

Yellow ceresin is purified ozokerite (fossil paraffine), and may be had in almost any quantity.

The burnt sienna may be used in smaller or larger quantity, according to the tint desired, or may be replaced by raw sienna or other color.

Dietrich recommends the following: To 400 parts of boiling water add 200 parts of yellow wax; when this is melted, add twenty-five parts of carbonate of potassium; boil for a moment or so, then remove the vessel from the fire and add thirty parts of spirits of turpentine. Stir until cool, and dilute with water to make 1,000 parts. If the floor is in good condition the dilution may be carried to 1,500. The object of the potassium salt is to form an emulsion with the wax.

Hardwood floors are sometimes filled and hard oiled, then waxed. Another way is to 'fill the wood' in the usual way, and then apply two or three coats of shellac, sandpapering lightly over each coat, and then giving two good coats of some elastic varnish, or a good spar varnish, allowing each coat to become hard and dry, and sandpapering the first coat lightly over to dull the gloss, and finishing with wax.

Still another method is to give the floor three thin coats of shellac, sandpapering lightly, then putting on wax dissolved in turpentine, and containing a little japan, and rubbing in with weighted brushes until the wood is filled and smooth. Allow a day or two to harden before using the floor. The wax should be applied in a liquid form, made so by heat, so that it will penetrate the pores of the wood, when shellac or other filler is not used beneath.

Besides the wax finishes, there are other methods of treating hardwood floors, some of which are excellent, and all of which are at least suggestive.

One method, advocated by a prominent master house painter, is to first coat the floor with a good, thin japan. Let dry, then rub off lightly with paper. Give another coat, let dry thoroughly, then finish over this with good varnish. This is said to wear well. Wax may be put over the japan instead of varnish, if desired. But in the opinion of those who have had large experience in the matter, if it is desired to finish a floor with wax, it will be best to begin with wax, and use nothing else.

A really good and easy method is to use linseed oil, the boiled article. Give the floor a coat of this. If put on hot, I should think it better. Rub the surface oil off, and after two days repeat the process. Elbow grease is to be used liberally also, to induce a polish which will not be so easily put out of sorts by shoes, chairs and other usual wear and tear.

A painter who has used this method for years states that the wood does not turn black, although it will, of course, darken with age.

A somewhat peculiar method used in some places is to thin shellac with alcohol, and mix with this some good elastic wagon varnish, shaking the ingredients well together, and then adding some hard-oil finish. This is applied in several coats and rubbed. A mixture of oil and turpentine, well rubbed over a filled floor, and rubbed frequently, will give a fine surface. A slow process, however.

Mr. Kirk, an old and prominent master painter of Washington, D. C., says he once finished a floor in the Corcoran art gallery in that city, coating it with wax and rubbing this with sour beer. He declares that this made a beautiful polish, but that the floor was too slippery to walk upon.

Some painters mix alcohol with wax, apply it to a filled floor while hot, and rub to a polish. The alcohol evaporates, leaving only the wax.

Carlile & Joy, the Philadelphia firm of decorators, believe that nothing should remain on the surface of the floor, but that it should all be in the pores of the wood. They use a good outside varnish, and rub down well to the wood. They use an oil polish, made from japan, turpentine and whiting. They say that oil in the wood causes sweating of subsequent coats of varnish, and this objection seems well taken.

Mr. Shay, of Boston, says, before finishing on shellac, milk should be used, rubbing it on, it is to be presumed, the same as oil. Crude petroleum, I believe, would be still better. When I was last in the business, a finisher who had to fix up some newly put in furniture in a new church building near me, came into my place to procure some crude petroleum. He was an old and good hand, and he said that it was the best thing he ever found for polishing furniture. I use it now on furniture in my own house that requires renovating, and it may be recommended for floors. A floor may be filled as any hard woodwork is filled, with a paste filler, and then varnished with a superior inside varnish, adding about one-third of turpentine, for the first coat. When dry, rub down. Second coat of clear varnish may then be laid on, and, when dry, rubbed. A third coat is then applied, and rubbed down with pumice stone (pulverized) and oil, to a satin finish, wiping off with cotton waste. By using water instead of oil, a dead finish may be had.

A good method of treating a yellow pine floor is to add just enough color, ground in oil, to pure boiled linseed oil to produce exactly the tone of color desired, and then rub this well into the wood with a woolen rag. After this is dry it may be rubbed with oil, or given two coats of the best elastic outside varnish. Interior varnish is not soft enough.

A recent issue of the *New York Journal of Commerce* gives some good suggestions worth noting here. This paper remarks, very properly, that the treatment of a floor depends upon the use to be made of the room, and that the wood should be well seasoned, and laid in narrow strips. For kitchens and sitting rooms it recommends raw linseed oil, with hand rubbing, or rubbing with the wax polishing brush. For a chamber, where a brighter finish is desired, after the first coat of oil, take two parts of linseed oil, two parts of alcohol, one part of turpentine, and one ounce of ether to a quart of the mixture. Apply briskly with a rag, and use as often as needed.

The darkening of hard pine floors by oil may be obviated by first putting on a thin film of shellac, on which varnish may be placed. The shellac preserves the brightness of the new wood, and what the oil in the varnish would darken. But on hard woods, such as oak and cherry, raw oil and a little turps and paste drier makes an excellent priming coat, being especially durable. Apply this to the raw wood, and when dry fill, finishing up with a good elastic varnish.

For outside hard pine floors, such as those of piazzas, there is nothing better than oil, if the natural finish is desired. Otherwise paint is best. Yellow pine does not wear well under exposure. It rots easily, especially where there is much dampness beneath. Hence, such floors should be coated with paint, the under side and edges, before being laid. And this will, indeed, apply to all inside floors of the first story.

Floors are frequently stained and also painted. A few years ago it was quite a fad to paint all the floors in the house in alternate stripes of buff and brown. The kitchen floor is frequently painted, while stain is very popular for borders and even entire floors.

Any color of stain may be applied, and when the required depth of color is obtained, take stained putty and stop all cracks and imperfections. This is important, and should be well done. The varnish may be rubbed down with pumice stone and water, or with crude petroleum and rotten stone.

I have a kitchen floor which I gave two coats of shellac to, last spring, and there is no suspicion of the shellac this spring. I shall now clean it well, and give it a few coats of oil, rubbing it in well, and repeating the operation through the summer. When fall comes the carpet will be relaid, and next spring I expect to see a nice, oil-polished floor then. And just here let me say that the very best treatment for a kitchen floor is a good old-fashioned rag carpet. It is, at least, hard to beat.